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THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE HIGH SCHOOL¹

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That the school is a society, that the child is a social being, that education is not preparation for life but life itself, are statements found in many oft-recurring forms in the literature of pedagogy. Of the truth of the principle involved there can be no doubt. In recent times the curriculum of the secondary school has been examined in the light of this doctrine and important modifications have been made involving the dropping of some subjects, the addition of others, and marked changes in methods of instruction. But no one will declare that with all these changes on the formal side our high schools are now making adequate provision for the social training of their pupils.

Sociability is a marked characteristic of the period of adolescence. Young people of this age form natural groups for team games, for literary and artistic pursuits of a more or less serious nature and for less serious enjoyments such as dancing. The reason underlying the formation of all these groups is their desire to be together. The home is able to provide for these social enjoyments only in a small degree and in most cases does not do so at all. The church does something in this direction

¹This article is the second in a series of articles by head-masters and principals, treating of the administrative problems of various types of secondary schools. The first article of the series, "The Aims, Duties, and Opportunities of the Head-Master of an Endowed Secondary School," by Dr. Endicott Peabody, appeared in the October number of the *School Review*, Vol. XVII, pp. 521-28.—Ed. *School Review*.

for those whom it is able to reach. Some churches have formed clubs for their boys and girls which in a measure satisfy the social needs of a few, but these organizations are usually restricted by lack of suitable leaders and of the faculties required to give variety and permanent attractiveness to their work. The Young Men's Christian Association also partly meets the needs of many. But the street corner, vacant lot, billiard hall, and sometimes less desirable places are often the only places in which this natural instinct finds unrestricted opportunity for development. Under these conditions it is small wonder that the satisfaction of this desire for social activity on the part of young people often takes forms annoying to the older and more serious members of the community, if not positively harmful to the young people themselves. But while the home, the church, and similar organizations are unable to meet the social needs of the adolescent boy and girl, the high school is peculiarly adapted to this end. It is the natural center for the promotion and proper regulation of this side of the pupil's life. Thrown together intimately during a large part of their waking hours, the pupils most naturally form their social groups from their schoolfellows. The classes form natural units for competition in athletic games: the pupil's interest in literary, musical, or artistic activities often makes it possible to turn his social instincts in directions which promote his intellectual and aesthetic development. There is also the additional advantage that the authority of the teachers, which controls the pupils as no authority outside of school does, if extended sympathetically to the social life of the pupils, assures a better regulation than can possibly be provided in any other way.

It is apparent that the high school has generally failed to recognize its responsibility in this direction. Athletic, literary, debating, musical, and art clubs, with the other forms of social activity natural to this period, are seldom thought of by school authorities as a means of securing an important educational end. Save as a principal or teacher has a chance interest in some particular form of the social life of his pupils, little attention is paid to these features of school life except to repress or control

their troublesome developments. For proof of this one need only look through the proceedings of our educational societies and the periodicals of secondary education, where he will find numerous articles dealing with the pathological side of the situation. Prominent among these are numerous papers dealing with the difficulties arising from the financial mismanagement of school athletics and the low standards of sportsmanship prevailing in high schools. Perhaps the best illustration of the serious consequences of the prevalent attitude of school authorities toward these matters is found in the school fraternity, which grew up and flourished recently in response to a real need of the pupils for the satisfaction of which the school made no provision. But neither the difficulties connected with school athletics nor the more serious ones of the school fraternity can be permanently removed by the method of repression. Unless we give more serious and intelligent consideration to the real nature of the problem we shall find ourselves before long confronted by the same difficulties in another form. We cannot change the nature of the boy nor should we try to do so. Only as we come to understand him and work sympathetically with him can we expect to secure peace for ourselves and an adequate social training for him.

The English public schools since the time of Arnold have recognized the importance of sports in developing the many qualities which make for sound character. One need only visit the playing fields of Rugby on an afternoon of a half-holiday and watch the boys at play, or walk through the cricket clubhouse where no lockers are necessary to insure the security of one's possessions, to realize that there are standards of honesty and sportsmanship attainable among boys which we have as yet hardly dared to hope for. It is true that the boys in these schools come from a distinct social class and present a homogeneity of ideal and training which is found in none of our public high schools and is only approached in a few of our private schools, yet the traditions and practices of the great public schools of England are the result of an appreciation of the possibilities of utilizing the natural social instincts of the boys and of a definite plan of

organization for the purpose of securing through these the best possible training for the leaders of the next generation. Of late, notable success has been secured in the same direction in the English municipal day schools, which are very much like our public high schools.² The most valuable lesson which we may learn from the English schools is in their recognition of the value of the more purely social activities as a means of training the youth and in their methods of organizing these activities in such a way as to secure the best results.

In this country many schools have adopted elaborate systems of social organization called "school cities" and generally spoken of under the rather misleading caption of "student self-government." These have consciously imitated the forms of organization of mature society, particularly on the repressive side, with policemen and courts of justice through which offenders against the requirements of the school society are detected, apprehended, tried, and sentenced by their fellows. It is claimed that practical civics may best be taught in this way, that pupils develop greater independence, a higher sense of honor, and more consideration for the rights of others. These desirable ends have doubtless been secured through the operation of the plan under favorable conditions. However, its adoption by teachers who had not considered sufficiently the details of the plan or by those who were not adapted to this peculiar method of control has led in many cases to its failure and abandonment. In the last analysis there is no such thing as successful student self-government. The guiding personality of the teacher, however tactfully he may conceal himself, is the one feature essential to its success. It may further be said that this form of organization is highly artificial and the duties which the pupils assume with the offices to which they are elected are likely to become uninteresting and arduous.

After all, the school city does not, as an essential part of its operation, make provision for those natural social activities to which I have just referred as so prominent in the life of the

² See the articles of J. J. Findlay (Manchester, England), on "The Corporate Life of the School," *School Review*, Vol. XV, 744-53 and Vol. XVI, 601-8.

English public schools. In these, the house, in which from forty to sixty boys live, forms the natural unit of organization of the social life. On entrance to school a boy is placed in a certain house of which he continues to be a member so long as he remains in the school. In this house center all his social interests and enthusiasms. For its honor he contends in football, cricket, and the other forms of contests, feeling greater concern only for the honor of his school as a whole. The same method of organization has been employed in many English day schools, the boys being divided into groups called "houses," carrying over this name from the boarding schools, although of course the boys do not live together in separate houses. Among the advantages of this method of organization are the following: the houses form units of convenient size and provide a large number of positions in which boys are learning how to be effective leaders; the permanency of the group makes it possible to build up strong and helpful traditions; the presence in the same house of boys at all stages of advancement brings the younger boys into intimate relation with their leaders and provides for the control of the younger by the older boys.

This house method with some modification has been adopted in some of our American boarding schools, but is not adapted to conditions in our high schools. What we may learn from the English school is not so much in the direction of formal organization as in the attitude of the teachers toward the social life of the boys. In England the secondary-school teacher feels it as much a part of his work to share in the sports of his boys on the playground as to instruct them in the classroom. It is not difficult to trace to its source the real reason why sport is enjoyed by English boys for its own sake and why the low standards of honesty and sportsmanship so often found in American schools are not to be found there. Instead of placing our teachers in responsible charge of the boys at their games, more often we leave them without supervision or give them into the hands of professional coaches whose personal habits are frequently questionable and whose chief desire is that their team may win at whatever cost. It is absolutely essential to the proper organiza-

tion and control of the social activities of the high school that the teachers shall recognize their value and share in the responsibility and labor involved. It is only fair to expect that time and effort spent by teachers in these directions shall be taken into consideration in the amount of other work assigned in the more formal work of teaching.

No such basis as the English schools find in their house plan for the formation of suitable groups seems to be at hand in our high schools. The classes form natural groups around which certain social activities center, but in the various literary, scientific, musical, and other clubs, no such basis of selection is appropriate. Here similarity of interest seems to offer the only basis for the formation of groups. One principle must be insisted upon, that all except class clubs shall be open to all the members of the school, both pupils and teachers.

The details of organization adapted to any individual school may best be worked out by those in charge. It may not be inappropriate to state with some completeness the methods employed and the results secured in the school with which the writer is connected. The University High School, Chicago, is a day school of 600 pupils of whom about two-thirds are boys. The school aims to provide for all the proper social activities of its pupils. These activities are in charge of four committees of the faculty as follows: Committee on Athletics and Games, Committee on Literary Clubs, Committee on Science and Art Clubs, Committee on Student Publications. The following rules have been adopted governing all clubs in the school: (1) All clubs have faculty advisers. (2) No club holds its meeting in the evening. (3) New clubs to be formed must obtain the approval of the appropriate faculty committee. (4) All clubs in arranging for the time of meeting must consult the appropriate faculty committee. (5) The days of meeting of the different clubs are: *Monday*—Music Clubs; *Tuesday*—Science and Literary Clubs; *Wednesday*—Arts and Crafts Clubs; *Thursday*—Debating Clubs; *Friday*—Parties. It is apparent that these activities are under careful supervision. This of course does not mean that the teachers exert a repressive influence that robs the social life of the

pupils of its natural spontaneity. They are rather helpful advisers sharing with the pupils in their enjoyment of their social life. The requirement that all meetings of clubs shall be in the daytime removes many difficulties that are found where pupils gather in the evening. All meetings are held on the school premises, the usual hour being three o'clock, the hour when the session of the day ends. The schedule providing for meetings of certain groups of clubs on certain days makes it possible for a pupil to belong to clubs of various sorts and thus extend his social activities more widely than he otherwise might.

Athletics naturally interest the greatest number of both boys and girls. For the boys athletics include football, baseball, track, basket-ball, swimming, golf, tennis, and gymnastics: for the girls there are basket-ball, baseball, hockey, tennis, golf, swimming, track, and gymnastics. These sports are in charge of the Department of Physical Instruction which consists of two men and two women who devote all their time to the physical training of the pupils with such assistants as are necessary to secure careful supervision of all games. There are contests throughout the entire year in these various sports, out of doors when the weather is suitable and indoors at other times. Most of the contests are between different teams of the school. For these teams the classes form the basis of division though the number of teams from a given class is not confined to one in each sport. For example, in the autumn, in football each class has its first and second teams. Definite schedules are played by the boys' class teams in football, baseball, track (both indoor and outdoor), basket-ball, and tennis, and by the girls' teams, in basket-ball, baseball, swimming, and tennis. With competition running high for places on these different teams and with daily practice or games, it will be seen that every afternoon throughout the entire year finds a large number both of the boys and of the girls engaged in competitive games of some sort. During the autumn of last year there were eight football teams practicing and playing regularly. It is possible in this way to rob of all weight the objection that athletics actually furnish physical training only to a few pupils and those the ones who least need it. While the school does not yet secure,

as do the English public schools, that each pupil who is physically able shall compete regularly in some form of athletic sport, yet a large part, both boys and girls, actually do engage in such sport with regularity under careful supervision.

While in most schools interschool games with the preparation of the teams for these contests comprise all the athletic training and are participated in by a very small number of pupils, in the University High School the interschool games comprise but a small part of those actually played. For example, last autumn while there were more than one hundred boys who played in football games, there were only four games played with teams from other schools. In some other forms of sport the number of interschool games was larger than in football, but in all the sports the number of games played between teams within the school was much in excess of those played with teams from other schools. It has been urged that distinct advantage would be gained if all interschool athletic games could be given up and all contests be confined to teams within the school. The high schools of one city have tried this plan and reports indicate that the results have been most satisfactory. This is doubtless an effective method of getting rid of the serious difficulties that have attended interschool games in the past. But these difficulties are not without possibility of remedy and giving up interschool contests is a distinct loss to a school. Dr. Gulich has shown³ that while the physical results of interschool athletics are inconsiderable, the chief end sought in these contests is not physical but social and moral training in which the whole school shares. By being loyal to his school, whether a member of a team or not, a boy is developing "the qualities of loyalty, of social morality, and of social conscience. These are the essential elements out of which social loyalty and morality may be developed." With clear vision and firm insistence upon high standards of sportsman-like conduct on the part of athletic teams, school officers may lay the foundation of traditions for clean and gentlemanly sport which every member of the school, as well as the members of the team, will take pride in maintaining. Not many years ago the annual football game

³ Team Games and Civic Loyalty," *School Review*, Vol. XIV., 676-78.

between two schools was attended with a general fight between the supporters of the opposing teams in which it was necessary for the police to take a hand, followed in the darkness of night by defacement of the walls of the school buildings by the painting of opprobrious epithets. Last autumn on the evening before the game between these same schools the members of one team were entertained at dinner by the members of the other, and while the game was attended by intense enthusiasm on the part of the supporters from each school there were none of the unfortunate occurrences of the former year and the two schools actually cheered for each other more than once during the game. There is no doubt that here was a distinct gain in social morality on the part of some 2,000 young people which was worth much effort to secure and which could not have been gained except through the agency of carefully conducted interschool athletics. In order to establish the relation of host and guest between the opposing teams, in the contract for two games in successive years with the only team outside Chicago with which our team will play there is a specific agreement that the home team shall entertain their visitors socially at dinner on the evening before the game.

At the close of the season for each sport, school emblems are awarded to members of the teams which have represented the school and to the class teams the privilege of wearing the class numeral is given. These are voted by the faculty committee on athletics on the recommendation of the member of the Department of Physical Training in charge of the team and the captain of the team. In awarding these emblems, faithfulness in training and in practice and loyalty to the team and school are fundamental requirements which are considered in addition to ability and performance in the games. It has happened that an athlete of exceptional ability has failed to receive an emblem because he did not meet the high standard set outside that for mere ability in the sport. When it is also considered that the privilege of representing the school in any form depends upon the satisfactory performance of scholastic work it will be understood that the school emblem is perhaps the most coveted possession one may secure. At the last assembly of each quarter the suc-

cesses of the teams are recounted by their fellows and the members are called upon the platform where amid great enthusiasm they receive their emblems. But opportunity is never lost at these times to point out the real meaning of the occasion and to restate and strengthen the traditions for manly sport that are becoming every year more effective in the school.

While athletics probably engage a larger amount of time and interest than all other forms of social life combined, provision is made for a great variety of social activity of other sorts. Debating is carried on in class clubs which meet at regular intervals and in the Clay Club, an organization which dates from the first year of the school. Debates are held each year with other schools for which the debaters are selected by competition open to the entire school. After the contests the sting of defeat as well as the elation of victory is tempered by bringing the representatives of the two schools together socially on the basis of guest and host. The Engineering Club holds regular meetings throughout the year at which reports are made and papers read both by members of the Club and by others. The Camera and Sketch clubs interest many, and make creditable exhibits of their work at the end of the year which attract the attention not only of members of the school but of many visitors. The Dramatic Club supplements regular work given to an elective class in connection with the English Department. Perhaps the most creditable public performance connected with all the social work of the school has been the annual dramatic entertainment which attracts a large and appreciative audience. Two short plays, of high literary and artistic merit, are presented, the object being to provide opportunity for as large a number as possible to share the benefits resulting from this training. Competent judges select the participants in trials open to all pupils of the school. There are various musical clubs, both vocal and instrumental, which meet regularly and furnish music for the school assemblies and various public occasions. Modern-language clubs make agreeable social adjuncts to the classroom work in these departments.

Reference has been made to the classes as forming natural

group divisions in athletics. These are also used for debating, music, class parties, etc. Class meetings give excellent opportunities for gaining knowledge and practice in parliamentary usage. Class elections are always held by ballot in the school office. Nominations are made by a committee elected by the class and additional nominations may be made by petition signed by ten members of the class. In practice this method of nomination is always employed.

There are three student publications, a daily newspaper, a monthly devoted to literary work, and an annual of the usual sort. Each of these is under the careful supervision of a teacher. The daily is a four-page sheet which covers in a thorough manner the daily happenings of the school and also serves as a bulletin for announcements to pupils and faculty. A separate group of editors has charge of each day's issue during the week, thus distributing the work so that it is not excessive. The material used in the monthly is selected from the regular theme work of the classes.

The Students' Council is an organization consisting of fifteen members, comprising the presidents of each of the four classes and four members of the senior class, three members of the junior class, and two members each from the sophomore and freshman classes. It is thus a representative group of the entire school. Regular meetings are held at which matters of general interest to the school are discussed. Recommendations from the students to the faculty are made through the medium of the council. Measures under consideration by the faculty are sometimes referred to the council and their opinion sought. Aside from these deliberative functions, the council nominates the candidates for managers of the various athletic teams before their election by the Faculty Committee on Athletics and Games.

A group of "honor societies" presents what is, perhaps, a unique feature in the high school. One of these, open both to boys and girls, is based on scholarship. Its object, as stated, is to maintain the standard of scholarship and to promote good fellowship among the members of the school. Election to this is confined to members of the senior class who have been mem-

bers of the school not less than two years, who have maintained a certain high record of scholarship, and who are of good moral character. All who have satisfied these conditions are elected to membership on approval of the deans. Membership in this society is a highly coveted honor. Two other societies, one each for boys and girls, are composed of members of the senior class selected because of distinguished service in promoting the social, as contrasted with the scholastic, life of the school. The membership of the boys' society is limited to fifteen, and of the girls' society to ten. For purpose of election to these societies, the more important of the offices in connection with the various social organizations are divided into two classes, major and minor. Those holding major offices become *ex officio* members. Of those holding minor offices enough are elected by the senior class to fill the membership of the boys' society to fifteen, and of the girls' to ten. In these elections, which are held by ballot in the school offices, boys vote for boys, and girls for girls. All candidates for these societies, both *ex officio* and by election, must be approved by vote of the faculty. That it may not appear that too great a premium is placed on the holding of office it should be stated that no one of these offices, either major or minor, can be held by one who has failed in any study during the previous quarter or whose work in any study is unsatisfactory at the time of election. That membership in these societies is the most highly coveted honor in the school will be easily appreciated. It is interesting to note that there are instances, though infrequent, in which the same pupil has been a member of the honor society based on scholarship and of that based on social prominence.

The general school assembly plays an important part in the social life of the school. This occurs on Monday morning and occupies a full hour. It is introduced by a brief formal religious service. The remainder of the hour is used in various ways to serve the interests of the school. All announcements regarding the different clubs and other student organizations are made by the student officers, who always speak from the platform. A sense of responsibility is thus encouraged in the officers and,

besides, there is no small value in this practice in extemporaneous speaking before a large and critical audience. School activities not easily under observation are made the subjects of special programmes. An example of this sort is the school daily to which an entire programme was given, embodying a description by several members of the staff of the process of bringing out a single issue. The awarding of emblems to the athletic teams at the close of each quarter has already been described. Frequent musical programmes are furnished by members of the faculty and pupils. There are lectures and addresses on appropriate subjects from time to time and of course there are certain vital topics which need to be presented by the officers of the school. In general it is the purpose to make the assembly an occasion in which the whole school gathers to consider together, in as informal a manner as possible, the things which are vitally interesting to the school.

The University High School, in common with most city high schools, has had its fraternity problem to settle. Five years ago there were in the school several secret societies among both boys and girls. The whole question was considered carefully for a year by faculty, parents, and students. As a result of much discussion it was decided by vote of the Parents' Association to rid the school of these organizations by requiring a pledge from the pupils who were then members that they would take no further members into their societies. The original societies, with constantly diminishing membership by reason of graduation or removal, had a legitimate existence in the school up to last year. All applicants for admission to the school before their applications are accepted are now required to present the following pledge signed by themselves and their parents or guardians:

I hereby declare that I am not a member of any fraternity, sorority, or other secret society, and that I am not pledged to any such society. I hereby promise without any mental reservation that, as long as I shall be a member of the University High School, I will have no connection whatever with any secret society, in this school or elsewhere. I also declare that I regard myself bound to keep these promises, and on no account to violate any of them.

The present situation with reference to fraternities has not been secured without many difficulties. These have been increased by the proximity of other schools in which chapters of the fraternities represented in the University High School could not be prevented from initiating members of the school. It has been necessary to remove from school a few who have violated their pledges. It may, however, fairly be said that the fraternity problem has been successfully solved.

The school authorities, however, have recognized that the fraternity represented the students' attempt to satisfy for themselves a genuine need. To provide for this natural desire of boys to get together in a place which they may call their own, the University High Club was started a little more than two years ago. Fortunately there was a two-story dwelling house situated on the school ground, and owned by the University which was easily made available for the use of the club. The house has a reception room, a reading-room, a dining-room, and a kitchen on the first floor; the second floor is occupied by the billiard-room and one or two other small rooms. The clubhouse is open each school day from 12:30 to 6 P. M. to members who may be either boys or male teachers of the school. The membership fee is within the reach of all. Additional income is obtained from the billiard and pool tables and from the lunchroom, which, by its profits, pays the expenses of a competent steward for the house. The officers of the club are boys who are under the supervision of a member of the faculty. Regular meetings of the officers and directors are held and a good deal of enterprise is shown in the management of club affairs. There is always a feeling of responsibility on the part of the officers who are among the older and more reliable boys which has absolutely prevented any serious misuse of the privileges of the club. The clubhouse is much frequented, boys and teachers enjoying its privileges together. Occasional social events take place here on Friday or Saturday evenings, such as small entertainments given by members of the club, or talks by men, sometimes the fathers of the boys. Visiting athletic teams are entertained here, the boys taking peculiar satisfaction in extending this courtesy in a club-

house which is their own. Occasionally on a Saturday or some other special day the clubhouse has been turned over to the girls who have greatly enjoyed this borrowed privilege. It was not, at first, practicable to think of providing permanently any similar facilities for a girls' club. This, however, has now been made possible in a part of a building which is being devoted to school uses this year, and the girls will now have clubrooms as well adapted to their use as those of the boys to theirs. A committee consisting of teachers, girls, and mothers is taking up carefully the plans for furnishing these rooms and organizing the club.

Up to this point no direct reference has been made to that side of the social life growing out of the association of boys and girls in the same school. Of course, these relations have been implied in connection with the class organizations and the various dramatic, musical, literary, and art clubs, in which the boys and girls mingle freely. It is, however, in connection with the parties that the boys and girls come together for the sole purpose of enjoying one another's society. On each Friday afternoon during the autumn and winter quarters, there is a dancing party in the gymnasium from three to four-thirty. This is in charge of the teacher who gives the regular class instruction in gymnastic dancing: there are also other teachers present and always a considerable number of parents. The party is open to all members of the school but to no one else. No one is allowed to enter after the party opens nor leave until its close, and all who are present participate. The dancing takes the form of a cotillion in which the figures are so devised as to secure a frequent and general mixing of the participants. The party closes formally, the parents and teachers standing in line to receive the good nights of the pupils as they pass out. These parties are largely attended, are evidently greatly enjoyed and are marked by naturalness in the relations of the boys and girls toward each other. The period since these parties have been held has witnessed a constant diminution in the silliness which is supposed to accompany the relations of boys and girls at this age and a corresponding increase in natural and unaffected con-

duct in the presence of each other. At the end of the autumn and winter quarters, two of these parties are made special occasions, one for the two lower, and the other for the two upper classes. At these the Parents' Association provides favors, refreshments, and special music. Again toward the close of the year, another party is given to the whole school under the same auspices, which is the only school party for the year held in the evening.

Reference has several times been made to the parents in connection with the social life of the school. It will easily be understood that no such elaborate social organization can be conducted successfully without the intelligent and substantial co-operation of the parents and pupils. The Parents' Association has taken up for consideration many of the features in the social organization described, has provided the money necessary to their inauguration, and each year provides the money necessary to maintain these activities. Through committees and individuals they come into very close contact with the social life of the school.

It is at once apparent that the conditions which make such a complete organization of the social life possible are peculiar to a few schools and that the resources necessary cannot be secured in most public and many private secondary schools. However, at the first, no one foresaw the full development of the elaborate organization in the University High School.⁴ The present condition has been an evolution which began in the idea that it was the function of the high school to provide for the training of the pupil's whole nature, followed by a determined effort to make this idea effective. With the same idea and determination any school, whatever its situation or circumstances, may at once begin to make effective those agencies which, as no others in our public schools can, train boys and girls to become morally self-reliant men and women.

⁴ For a statement of the theoretical basis of the social organization of the University High School the reader is referred to the article "Social Education through the School," *School Review*, Vol. XV, pp. 11-23, by William Bishop Owen, dean of the school during the years 1903-9, who is chiefly responsible for the organization described in the present article.